

Book Review

Debating Christian Theism

Timothy Chambers

***Debating Christian Theism.* J.P. Moreland, Chad Meister, and Khaldoun A. Sweis (eds.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013, xv + 554 pp. \$35.00 pbk. ISBN 978-0-19-975543-1.**

Essays Philos (2015)16:298-315 | DOI: 10.7710/1526-0569.1537

Published online: 7 July 2015. © Timothy Chambers 2015

Contact author: tcham71@gmail.com

*[W]henever we feel there is something odd in
Christian theology, we shall generally find that
there is something odd in the truth (G.K.
Chesterton, Orthodoxy)*

*Science in general...does violence to common
sense...Aren't you glad to be alive in a world where
not only [is this] possible but you are privileged to
understand why? (Richard Dawkins, The God
Delusion)*

How often does philosophy seem to be a matter of weighing one mysterious hypothesis against another? Alfred North Whitehead, acutely captured this

mysterious spirit of philosophy when he observed that, “Philosophy begins in wonder. And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.”ⁱ

While Chesterton and Dawkins would disagree on much, it seems that they would concur that “biting the bullet” on one set of mysteries, rather than another, is emphatically not an arbitrary matter. Because there are mysteries, and then there are mysteries: By Chesterton’s lights, some mysteries bless the human spirit, while others damn it. “The morbid [materialist] logician,” he declares, “seeks to make everything lucid, and succeeds in making everything mysterious. The [Christian] mystic allows one thing to be mysterious, and everything else becomes lucid.”ⁱⁱ By Dawkins’ lights, some (common sense-confuting) mysteries cohere with scientifically-refined Reason, while others sacrifice such rationality for over-indulgence in “childish” tendencies toward dualism and teleology.ⁱⁱⁱ

My personal project while perusing this delightful anthology was to discern instances of this “mystery tradeoff” in practice.^{iv} But I hasten to add that this text, which contains 20 debates on pivotal questions of metaphysics, epistemology, meta-ethics and theology bearing on Christian theism, is a wonderful resource for many other projects. For instance, any graduate student seeking to specialize in Christian philosophy (or, for that matter, “New Atheism”) would do well to become fluent in these interlocutors’ (mostly) agreeably-waged disagreements. At the same time, I would observe that this is an *advanced*-level text: a reader will best benefit from this text if they are already quite familiar with the topics it treats, as well as various technical tools of analytic philosophy (possible worlds verbiage, Cantor’s set-theoretic paradoxes, Bayes’ theorem, quantified first-order logic, *etc.*)

While the text is divided into two parts (“Debates About God’s Existence” and “Debates About Specific Christian Beliefs”), my own reading led to a three-(perhaps three-and-a-half-)fold partition.

(1a) *Materialist Mysteries*: One kind of mystery involves a claim which confutes long-standing generalizations drawn from common experience and straightforward introspection—“common sense.” The quantum world is mysterious in just this way, but it has two saving graces: astonishing predictive power, and that we don’t go “down the drain” by having to *live* (as opposed to *practice science*) in such a world.^v

Christian critiques of materialist (a.k.a. “naturalist” or “physicalist”) positions often allege that they foist mysteries upon us without sufficient saving graces. In this spirit, William Lane Craig (§1) presents his account of the Kalam Cosmological Argument, which aims at the putative materialist mystery that *Out of nothing, something sometimes comes*. Craig stresses that a two-fold mystery confronts the believer in a God-less cosmos. For one, we’d need to think the universe “popped out of nothing,” in contrast with our common-sense views of cause-and-effect (“Why [then] do bicycles and Beethoven and root beer not pop into being from nothing?” [16]). But if we try to sidestep this mystery by positing an eternal universe, we end up confronting another blind alley: the cosmos contains an (actual) infinite set of events, thus opening the way to allowing “*in concreto* absurdities” akin to Hilbert’s Hotel. *Not so*, rejoins Wes Morriston (§2). A beginningless universe’s history might contain an infinite set of events, but this, alone, doesn’t allow for Hilbert Hotel-style absurdities—it does so only if those events can be somehow *manipulated*, but *events* can’t be so-manipulated. As for bicycles popping into being from nothing, allowing

an uncaused cosmos need not entail uncaused events *within* that cosmos. (To be sure, Craig finds it mysterious that a metaphysical principle, *Every event has a cause*, should be inflexible within the universe, but relaxed outside of it. To which Morriston rejoins that positing an incorporeal God as Creator mysteriously confutes its own bedrock empirical principle: *Material events only have material causes*.)

Similar dialectics arise for other disputes in this anthology. Thus Robin Collins and Victor J. Stenger (§§3-4) wrangle over the fine-tuning argument from design (which aims to undermine the notion that *From non-design, design-like order may come*). Collins alleges that naturalism leaves us with the mystery that (quoting Roger Penrose), “[i]n order to produce a universe resembling the one in which we live, the Creator would have to aim for an absurdly tiny volume of the phase space of possible universes.” (38) Thus, in lieu of such a Creator, the materialist would have us merely conclude that we won a very unlikely Cosmic Lottery. Against this, Stenger argues that the putative mystery is merely an artifact of an insufficiently nuanced understanding of “naturalism” (physical constants and probability theory, *inter alia*). Paul Copan and Louise Antony (§§ 7-8) offer a thought-provoking exchange on the Moral Proof of God (*versus* the notion that, *From valuelessness, value sometimes comes*). Specifically, Antony’s response can be seen as confronting the Chestertonian charge—to wit, that the very mysteries Copan saddles upon the naturalist (e.g., that a Divine Lawgiver is necessary to avoid *ungrounded* moral truths) prove no less vexing on a theistic system, once terms of the mystery (X *grounds* Y) are scrutinized. And J.P. Moreland and Graham Oppy trade rival perspectives on the Argument from Consciousness (which militates against the notion that, *From non-conscious matter, consciousness sometimes comes*).^{vi}

(1b) *Science, History, and Common Assent*: Happily for civilization (and epistemologists studying “testimony”), the conditions for *common assent*—commonplace beliefs in a society—aren’t exhausted by the two conditions cited above for “common sense.” Most of us believe in a heliocentric solar system, despite the fact that this model isn’t obvious from experience, nor do more than a few of us introspect on the matter as patiently as Galileo did in the *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*. And most of us assent to milestone events occurring in 1066, 1215, 1776 and on Sept. 1, 1939, despite the fact that these events are unavailable to present direct experience and introspection. As several debates in this anthology illustrate, the disputes between Christian theists and their critics can sometimes be understood as collisions between “common sense” and (scientifically/historically justified) “common assent.”

Evolutionary accounts of our epistemological faculties occasion one such collision (§§17-18). Common-sense intuitions about the physical world’s workings (“folk physics”) are notoriously unreliable.^{vii} In accounting for this, evolutionary psychology avails itself of an intriguing gambit: that while our faculties are *unreliable* (as gauged by empirical physics), these faculties were nonetheless *adaptive* (as gauged by Darwinian natural selection). So far, so good. But theistic objections arise when their naturalist foes try to push this gambit further—to wit, that natural selection might have selected (or selected *for*^{viii}) faculties which deliver “folk theology”—tendencies toward inferring incorporeal minds (dualism) and confabulating purposes for events (teleology)—on the basis of their adaptive value, irrespective of whether such theological intuitions reliably reflect some transcendental reality. Put plainly: the nontheistic evolutionary gambit urges that *If God had not existed, then Darwinian Mother Nature would have invented Him for us, anyway.*

Joseph Bulbulia (§17) describes how a Bayesian calculus for rational belief-revision, coupled with the foregoing slogan, could challenge some theistic believers' confidence of their theism—specifically, by increasing the probability of theistic-convictions-given-a-nontheistic-world ($P[\text{God-convictions}|\text{God does not exist}]$), which, when it appears in the denominator of Bayes' theorem (*ceteris paribus*^{ix}), would lower the evidentiary value of one's theistic convictions for supporting God's existence ($P[\text{God exists}|\text{God-convictions}]$). (It's easiest to see how this line of thought should give pause to those who evidence their theological views solely by subjective "religious experience.") Against this line of reasoning, Michael J. Murray and Jeffrey P. Schloss (§18) offer a number of considerations to attenuate the challenge Bulbulia describes. For one, the challenge is plausible only insofar as we concede that evolutionarily-delivered mechanisms exhaust our epistemological faculties (which would presuppose the nonexistence of a *sensus divinitatis* as posited by Reformed epistemology). For another, the Bayesian pessimism is plausible only insofar as one presumes that non-theistic mechanisms suffice for the rise of human beings, human minds, rationality, consciousness, *etc.* (otherwise, the theist could rejoin to the pessimist's slogan with, "*If God had not existed, then Darwinian Mother Nature couldn't have invented us, in the first place!*") But in light of the essays we canvassed in part (1a), such a presumption is one which we could expect the theist to reject. Lastly, even *conceding* the possibility that *Darwinian Mother Nature* could have engendered (false) theistic convictions/beliefs in us, this need not be grounds for religious skepticism—unless the atheist can distinguish this possibility from such practically idle skeptical possibilities as, *A Cartesian Evil Demon* could have engendered (false) material convictions/beliefs in us. At the very least, it takes some careful maneuvers to frame an evolutionary argument for religious skepticism which

doesn't already have elements of that skepticism surreptitiously "baked into" the premises.

Evolution isn't the only field of scientific common assent to inspire non-theists' challenges to a traditional Christian metaphysic. Stewart Goetz (§19) and Kevin Corcoran (§20) spar over the implications of the neurosciences for traditional substance dualism. While Corcoran acknowledges that correlation between complex neurobiological- and mental-events doesn't *entail* the non-existence of mental substances such as souls or Cartesian minds, the neurosciences have a stubborn habit of elbowing aside immaterial items in explaining matters of clinical psychology. Yet "[i]f dualism were true...we would not expect to discover [such] thoroughgoing and deep causal dependencies of consciousness and experience on brain activities and states" (274). In response, Goetz observes that souls (or immaterial minds), so far as explanatory value is to be gauged, aren't expected by the dualist to innervate *physical* explanations, but *metaphysical* ones (such as "explaining of nondeterministic choices or the possibility of life after death" (268)). This kind of distinction, of course, exemplifies a more general issue: Is it tenable to segregate Existence into (borrowing Stephen Jay Gould's phrase) "*magisteria*" in such a way that empirical explanations reign in one (the "physical"), without contradicting those religious explanations reigning in the other (the "ethical" or "metaphysical")? Julian Baggini and Keith Ward dispute this contentious question (§§23-24).

Historians sometimes tell unlikely tales—and we believe them. If I'd first heard about Mt. Vesuvius from anyone but a history teacher, I may well have been skeptical. But I trust that historians are faithful to truth-conducive habits of justification in their circles; for that reason, their testimony

can override my common sense skepticism. Should I follow a similar route when the tale is not just spectacular, but truly *miraculous*, as found in the Judeo-Christian scriptures? This is the question afoot in debates concerning the Gospels as historical documents (§§31-32), the historical Jesus (§§33-34) and the Resurrection as a historically-supportable event (§§35-36).

At the risk of oversimplifying, these disputes seem to turn upon a simple slogan akin to the one arising for evolution and “folk theology”: *If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead (or raise the dead or change water to wine, etc.), then the pre-Scriptural Christian oral tradition could plausibly have evolved these “folk traditions,” anyway.* Perhaps unsurprisingly, two of the theistic contributors to the topic of history and the Gospels (Stephen T. Davis (§31, 424) and Gary R. Habermas (§35, 479)) suspect that the foregoing “anthropological slogan” owes at least some of its inspiration to an *a priori* commitment to a naturalistic “worldview.” Such a suspicion seems, to these theists, invited by their opponents’ seemingly abrupt secular diagnoses. For instance, Habermas suspects that the naturalistic presumption *tacitly* inspires James Crossley’s rejection of the Empty Tomb story in Mark 16:1-8 as “invented,” since Habermas finds Crossley’s *explicit* form-critical grounds (§36, 487-489) to be merely “fragile and unconvincing questions” (479). Another example can be found in Davis’s perplexity over Marcus Borg’s seeming acceptance of the “anthropological slogan” when he relegates the miraculous claims about Jesus’ life to “*post-Easter beliefs*” arising in the oral tradition (§32, 432-433); Davis is perplexed that Borg doesn’t wonder, “[W]hat was it about the disciples’ *experience* of the pre-Easter Jesus that made it possible for them later to [“rapidly”] arrive at such lofty notions [Jesus’ miracles, preexistence, divine Sonship, etc.]?” (428n8, emphasis mine). Davis’s

perplexity in the face of the claim that (call it) “anthropological selection,” alone, could generate the Greatest Story Ever Told sounds familiar; it’s reminiscent of those theists’ perplexity in the face of naturalists claiming that materialist natural selection, alone, could generate all the grandeur of Human Life.

But theists aren’t the only ones who are puzzled by their interlocutors’ seeming blind-spots. By the skeptics’ lights, theists who would urge a literal account of the Gospels appear to be under-attentive to the workings of oral traditions—to wit, that *historical reliability* might be a factor accidental to what would have made a “folk tradition” *adaptive* to its Ancient audiences (in the sense of being likely to be believed and/or re-told): “It is now clearer than ever,” Stephen J. Patterson remarks, “that oral tradition tries for gist, not reproduction, is malleable, not static, and develops in close relationship to changing community circumstances” (§33, 450). Moreover, while advocates of a literal Gospel urge skeptics to be more open-minded towards the miraculous elements in Christianity, critics sometimes rejoin that Christian “open-mindedness,” in this context, seems suspiciously biased; specifically, Patterson is curious why he’s found that, in his experience, no “evangelical scholar [applies] the same openness to the supernatural claims made about pagan or Jewish figures of the past, or about the founder figures of other religions, for whom similar claims are made” (449).

At the risk of oversimplifying (again), it seems the foregoing disputes are founded on a basic standoff. All parties are agreed that we would like our scientific and historical accounts to be *parsimonious*, but there are two main rival candidates for parsimony afoot. For one, we can speak of *ontological* parsimony: that *natural events* (“The disciples believed that Christ rose from the dead”) ought

only to be accounted for in terms of *natural events* (the disciples' culture, conditions of testimonial-transmission, etc.).^x For another, we might speak of *epistemological parsimony*: that where we find *testimony that X occurred*, our (much) favored-hypothesis ought to be that *X occurred*, rather than some convoluted error-theory to "explain away" the testimony that X occurred.^{xi}

This brings us to the doorstep of *abduction*: that, from the facts, we ought to infer the "best explanation" of those facts. But of course, the criteria by which we judge what makes a theory more or less "virtuous," in this sense, are an eclectic mix.

(2) *Theistic Mysteries*: Physicist Eugene Wigner famously wrote about the "unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics in the natural sciences."^{xii} Whether or not it's unreasonable, the effectiveness of (*a priori*) mathematics for practicing (*a posteriori*) science animates an empirical expectation: a theory that's true (or at least rationally acceptable) ought to be sufficiently *elegant*—sufficiently "simple," for instance, and fitting the evidence at hand without "*ad hoc*" additions to the theory. Thus, if a theory, when subjected to rational scrutiny, leads to "clarifications" which render it less and less theoretically virtuous, then to that degree the empirically-minded observer will find it mysterious that such a theory could be true (or at least, that other rational inquirers could find that theory rationally acceptable).

Some of the nontheists' essays in this volume allege that just such unvirtuous mystery attaches to attempts to conceptualize the Divine attributes. Thus Nicholas Everitt's essay (§11) traces how hosts of counterexamples chase conceptualizations of the claim, "God is omnipotent," into increasingly convoluted accounts. In the end, Everitt

concludes, theists might do well to follow Peter Geach's suggestion that *omnipotence* be replaced with a purely theological concept (that God is *Almighty*). Similarly, Patrick Grim's essay (§13) probes how God's omniscience (in the sense of knowing all truths) can be squared with now-familiar paradoxes: the Liar (does God know that *God does not know this sentence?*), Knowability (does God know that *knowledge entails truth?* And is His knowledge closed under logical consequence?), and Cantorian considerations (if a *set of all truths* cannot mathematically exist, in what sense can the mind of God know all truths?). As the epicycles mount in trying to save coherent concepts of omnipotence and omniscience, the nontheist grows increasingly puzzled over why theists don't just concede they're pursuing a Ptolemaic project: "One might propose changing logics," Grim concludes, "One might propose changing concepts. But...[t]he logical problems facing omniscience seem to me as close to a knock-down argument as one ever gets" (178).

In response to these complications, Charles Taliaferro (§12) and Jerome Gellman (§14) would take issue with my Ptolemaic analogy. First, Gellman offers a counter-analogy: when Russell's Paradox led to a rejection of Naïve Set Theory, it didn't lead mathematicians to jettison the concept of *sets*; instead, mathematicians refined the concept according to, for instance, Russell's Ramified Set Theory. In this spirit, Gellman offers a "ramified theory of omniscience" (182), tailored to the specific theological purposes God's omniscience is intended to achieve in the context of a practicing religious life. Taliaferro urges a similar turn, viewing the putative proofs of omnipotence's incoherence as fallaciously taking the concept out of its proper context: "Religious tradition is full of claims that God can do what for us is impossible...but there is no claim I know of in concrete, living religious traditions that

God can do what is *absolutely, logically impossible*...And some of the cases of so-called obstacles to divine omnipotence seem merely capricious or of only conceptual as opposed to real interest" (159).

(3) *Theological Mysteries*: Taliaferro's reference to "concrete, living religious traditions" prompts me to imagine a more sweeping (but religiously commonplace) reaction to the puzzles encountered in conceptualizing the Divine attributes. At least some of the churchgoers I know might actually be *unmystified* that nontheists (and overly analytic theists) are mystified by the Divine nature. "Well, what did they *expect*?" I can picture someone in a Chestertonian mood reacting. "Didn't God *tell* us that, *as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts*?" (Isaiah 55:9) On this view, revelation exists for a reason: to inform believers on matters which outrun the reach of human epistemological faculties. Thus, tenets of Christian theology, if they are to be studied fruitfully, should be approached with (to borrow Davis's apt phrase (417)) a "hermeneutic of trust." Helpfully, a number of essays in the present anthology suggest some explication of this spirit of trust, as well as practice Christian theology within the context of that trust.

A classic Hasidic anecdote answers the question "Where is God?" with "Wherever we let God in." In this spirit, we can picture a theistic rejoinder to Carl Sagan's skeptical slogan ("Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence") to the effect that being cognizant of evidence *as evidence* for certain theological claims requires a special kind of *receptivity* to the evidenced claim: "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). In his essay on "Christianity and Miracles" (§21),

Paul K. Moser cites this gospel-verse (288) in the course of arguing against “any kind of historical empiricism as a means for adjudicating the resurrection of Jesus or related divine signs (291).^{xiii} Instead, miracle-stories are best viewed as attempts to reach a reader’s capacity for “Faith...[i.e.,] the openness of our heart for God’s love” (294, quoting Emil Brunner). For it is only upon experiencing Divine love that two conditions are met: (a) we have a “salient *experience* that serves as the cognitive, evidential foundation for a well-founded belief in God” (295); and (b) such an *experience* is necessary to achieve the transformation (conversion) of a believer’s heart which is essential to the Christian God’s plan for human redemption (294-295).^{xiv}

It is perhaps noteworthy that this process of human redemption can be seen as one way of meeting the vexing Problem of Evil, in the form of an “internal” theodicy sometimes called the Greatest Story Ever Told theodicy (which Gale credits to Alvin Plantinga (202)):

1. Any possible world with the Incarnation and Atonement is better than any world without it.
2. All possible worlds with the Incarnation and Atonement must contain evil.
3. Thus, evil is justified in possible worlds with Incarnation and Atonement.
4. But the actual world contains the Incarnation and Atonement.
5. Thus, evil is actually justified.

Several essays in the present anthology explicate (or critique) the Great (or mysterious) terms and conditions of this redemptive Story. Michael Martin critiques (§30) the Incarnation as incoherent, for instance, whereas Katherin A. Rogers offers an “Anselmian” defense of it (§29).^{xv} John

Hick's essay (§28) describes how Christ's role as a *ransom* (or *debt-satisfaction* or *substitute-sacrifice*) in atoning for human sin (including the notion of *original sin*), are theological concepts inspired by medieval social and legal traditions. Yet Hick is skeptical that Jesus's role in atoning for human sin (via crucifixion) can be rendered plausible in contemporary moral terms. Even while Hick praises Richard Swinburne's (§27) account of guilt and reconciliation between people as "excellent" (and it *is*), Hick nonetheless rejects the suggestion that Swinburne's four-fold *repentance-apology-reparation-penance*-process of worldly atonement can be carried over to characterize an atonement transaction between a human being and God, whom "we cannot benefit or injure...over and above our actions in benefitting and injuring our fellow creatures" (381).

Another complication with an account placing Jesus at the necessary center of a transaction for human salvation is the old puzzle of exclusion: Do believers in non-Christian faiths thereby become excluded from salvation (Heaven)—or, worse, become candidates for eternal punishment (Hell)? Paul F. Knitter (§38) argues against such a conclusion, stressing that apparent Biblical claims of exclusivity are better understood as a poetic "love language," similar to when one praises one's beloved as one's "one and only" (514). Knitter adds, (citing Krister Stendahl), that such exclusive (and potentially divisive) language ought also to be understood as an intimate "'home language'...[to be used] within [only] our own communities in 'the language of prayer, worship, and doxology.'" (515). In response, Harold Netland avers that such a stance (typical of efforts at framing religious pluralism) "is simply reductionism that refuses to take seriously the claims of the various religions on their own terms" (503). One compact way of putting this complaint is that a religious believer who also accepts religious

pluralism seems committed to a mysterious stance (not unlike Moore's Paradox) of affirming, *I believe it, but it's not true*. Netland counters that religious pluralism commits us to claiming that "[w]hat is really religiously ultimate [what is True]...will transcend the conceptions of both theistic and nontheistic traditions" (503). But such a view is incompatible with avowals *within* those traditions.

The concern over Christian exclusion also animates Keith Parsons' (§40) critique of the doctrines of Heaven and Hell. To be sure, some Christian commentators (e.g., Jerry Walls (§39)) try to alleviate the exclusionary worry by (a) speaking of Hell, not as a site of souls simmering over open flames, but rather as merely the *negation* of Heaven ("a perfectly loving [eternal] relationship with God and other persons" (530)); and (b) allowing for a "second chance" at Heaven in the afterlife, for those whose non-acceptance of Christ in their terrestrial lives owed to involuntary "political, social, cultural, or psychological factors." Parsons takes issue with the foregoing doctrine's apparent upshot that "there can be no such thing as someone who fairly and fully, and without 'blind spots,'...reasonably den[y]" Christianity and that "such open-eyed repudiation can only be due to [quoting Walls] 'concupiscence and wickedness of heart'" (543), thus rendering them unfit for Heaven's perfectly loving relationships with God and others. Or, to put Parsons' challenge in the vocabulary which opened this section: Is it possible to spell out the requisite *receptivity* of an agent, an "openness of heart to God's love," in such a way that can explain open-eyed cognitive skepticism of Christianity, on the one hand, without impugning such skeptics as somehow emotionally foolish (or worse), on the other?^{xvi}

Just such a question illustrates how deeply the mysteries of Christianity in particular, and of spiritual faith (or lack of

it) in general, engages with a person's entire life-condition—cognitive and affective, commonplace and cosmic. J.P. Moreland, Chad Meister, and Khaldoun A. Sweis have done a masterful job at collecting a volume of contributions which treat these matters seriously and illuminate them impressively.

NOTES

ⁱ Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: The Free Press, 1938), 168.

ⁱⁱ G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (1908; New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2007), 20-21.

ⁱⁱⁱ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 2006), 179-190.

^{iv} Hilary Putnam once offered a compact set of “desiderata for a moral system”: it should (1) have “basic assumptions...[that] have *wide appeal*”; it should (2) “be able to withstand rational criticism”; and the system (3) “should be *livable*” (*Reason, Truth and History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 105). While Putnam's criteria were intended to gauge *ethical* systems, I found them to be helpful guideposts in spotting the broad intuitions at work behind the debates contained in the present anthology.

^v The phrase is Richard Feynman's: “I think I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics...Do not keep saying to yourself, if you can possibly avoid it, ‘But how can it be like that?’ because you will get ‘down the drain,’ into a blind alley from which nobody has yet escaped” (*The Character of Physical Law* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967], 129).

^{vi} Lest it be thought that the common-sense mysteries ensnare only nontheists, Richard M. Gale and Chad Meister's contributions (§§15-16) bear upon the main moral mystery that Christian theists must address: the Problem of Evil that *Out of a world created by a perfect Deity, evil sometimes comes*. Also, in a sense, Anselm's Ontological Argument was originally inspired by a theistic mystery: *Out of intelligent minds, atheistic foolishness sometimes comes*, inspired by the twice-repeated claim in the psalter: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (*Psalms* 14:1, 53:1). The Ontological Argument receives discussion in this anthology (§§5-6), but not in Anselm's

spirit. Instead, E.J. Lowe offers a novel (and challenging) ontological proof. Graham Oppy offers an astute critique of some of Lowe's previous efforts.

^{vii} For a brief review, see Michael McClosky, "Intuitive Physics," *Scientific American* 248 (April 1983): 122-130.

^{viii} The importance of keeping the "selected/selected *for*"-distinction clear also arises in discussions of evolutionary accounts of human morality, as Antony points out in her contribution (§8, 107-108).

^{ix} Bayes' equation, for this case, would be given by: $P[\text{God exists}|\text{God-convictions}] = P[\text{God-convictions}|\text{God exists}] * P[\text{God exists}] / \{ P[\text{God-convictions}|\text{God exists}] * P[\text{God exists}] + P[\text{God-convictions}|\text{God does not exist}] * P[\text{God does not exist}] \}$. So, to take a trivial case, if one's *a priori* estimate of atheism's probability ($P[\text{God does not exist}]$) is sufficiently low, then the impact of evolutionary accounts' raising the likelihood of God-convictions in an atheistic cosmos ($P[\text{God-convictions}|\text{God does not exist}]$), could still be negligible.

^x In the spirit of Hume: "when we infer any particular cause from an effect, we must proportion the one to the other, and can never be allowed to ascribe to the cause any qualities, but what are exactly sufficient to produce the effect" (*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* [1748; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975], 136).

^{xi} In the spirit of Chesterton: "The open, obvious, democratic thing is to believe an old apple-woman when she bears testimony to a miracle, just as you believe an old apple-woman when she bears testimony to a murder" (*Orthodoxy*, 142).

^{xii} "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences," in *Symmetries and Reflections* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1967), 222-237.

^{xiii} Evan Fales (§22) also counts "historical empiricism" with respect to miracles as a non-starter, owing to well-known Humean considerations. Instead, Fales urges that scriptural miracle-stories ought to be read under a purely narrative, symbolic interpretation.

^{xiv} To be sure, a skeptic can be expected to balk at the kind of "receptivity" sketched here, viewing it, perhaps, as merely a species of Hume's notion of commonplace human "*credulity*" (e.g., *confirmation bias*). By way of response, it might not be untoward for the Christian to point out that Faith isn't the only *living* institution which admits a kind of "*wise credulity*," at least if Ben Franklin is to be believed: "Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards" (*Poor Richard's Almanack and Other Writings* [1738; New York: Dover Publications, 2013], 77).

^{xv} Is the Trinity essential to the Christian faith? Thomas D. Senor (§25) offers a concept of the Trinity inspired by a hybrid between Greek Orthodox and Latin Trinitarian theologies. This, he observes, allows for a doctrine for which, “[w]hile a good dose of mystery clearly abounds, logical incoherence does not” (346). Timothy Winter (§26) sets aside the question of the doctrine’s *logical* coherence, arguing instead that: (a) the Trinity is “incompatible with a [scriptural] understanding of Jesus and the apostolic generations” (353) and (b) the doctrine’s obscurity tends to demoralize, rather than edify, a Christian pilgrim’s living faith.

^{xvi} The question becomes even more complicated when posed against the backdrop of real-life case studies of ordinary religious *apostates*—individuals who once had religious faith (and hence requisite *receptivity?*), but later lost that faith. Such apostates are, at least in the experience of sociologist Phil Zuckerman, rarely deficient in open-mindedness or sensitivity of heart. See his *Faith No More: Why People Reject Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).